



Report to
Mayor Anthony A. Williams
from the

Mayoral Task Force on Transit-Oriented Development



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Government of the
District of Columbia
Office of Planning
Department of Transportation



MAYORAL TASK FORCE on TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT



T O D

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A TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY for the DISTRICT of COLUMBIA



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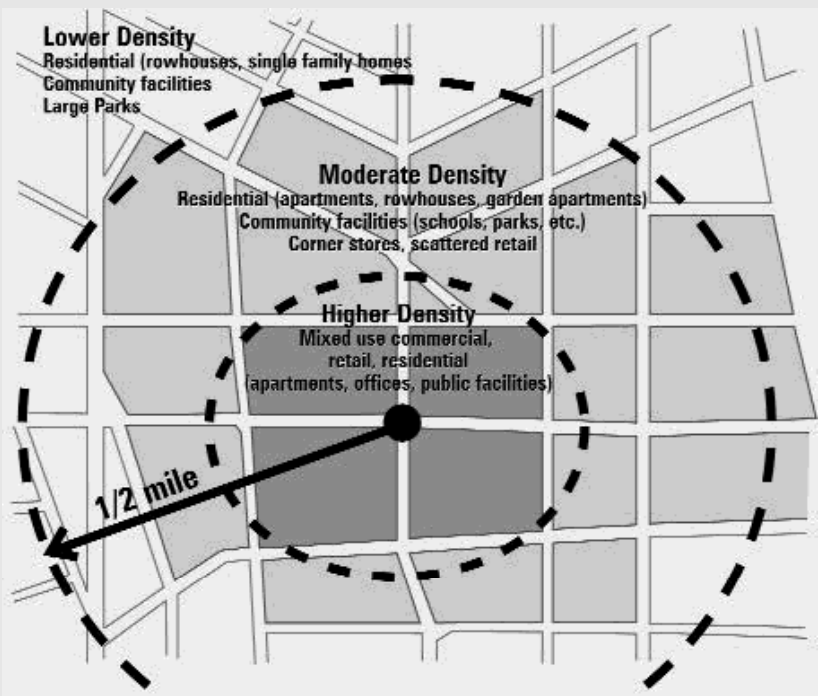
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mayor's Task Force on Transit-Oriented Development met from October 2001 to February 2002. Their task was to evaluate the potential to pursue and implement transit-oriented development in the Nation's Capital; identify challenges and opportunities; and recommend a policy strategy. The Task Force was comprised of a broad cross-section of stakeholders at all levels – neighborhood, District, regional, and national. In addition to the Task Force, a series of focus group sessions were held to solicit broader input and guidance to Task Force recommendations.

The Task Force found that there was significant opportunity and need to pursue transit-oriented development in the District to strengthen the city's traditional neighborhood centers, attract new investment to struggling neighborhood main streets, and improve economic and environmental conditions throughout the region. Focus group responses indicated that there was strong support for a TOD policy at the neighborhood level and within the private sector.

The Task Force recommended a number of short-, mid-, and long-term strategies to implement a TOD framework. These strategies included:

- Community education and outreach
- Transit-oriented zoning and design guidelines
- Strategic plans for specific transit-areas
- Preference in public investment, financing and incentives in transit areas
- Targeted incentives including community amenities, services and programs in transit areas
- Innovative partnerships with private and federal employers
- Strong regional leadership
- Transit expansions and enhancements
- Dedicated funding for transit and transit-area planning and implementation



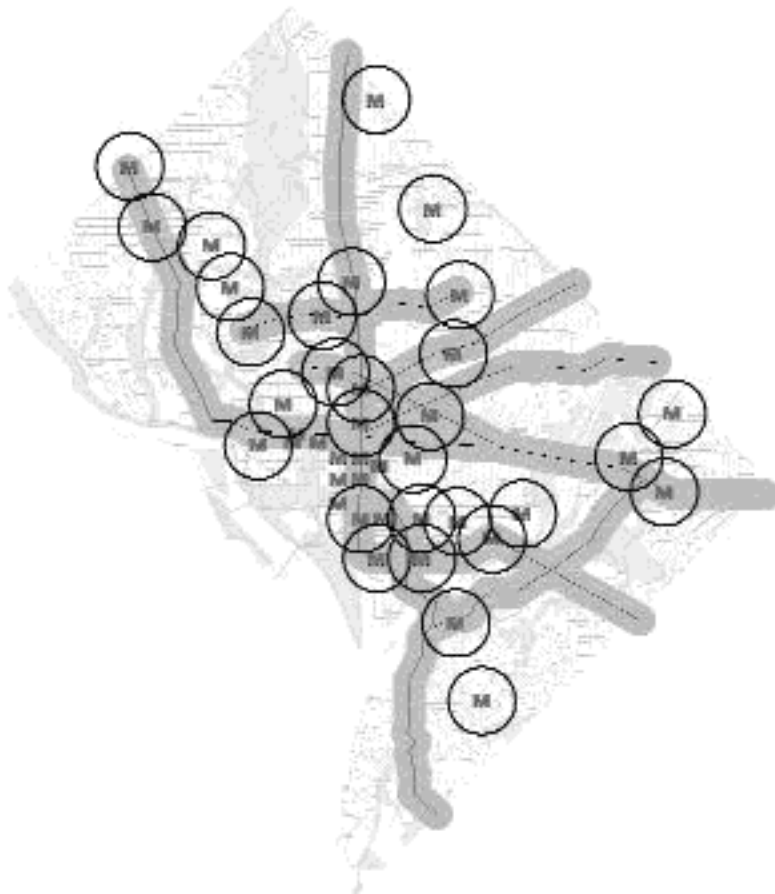
Source: adapted from New Jersey Transit

BACKGROUND

Save for New York City, no American city matches Washington, DC in transit system extensiveness and use. However, this multi-billion dollar asset has not been fully utilized as a resource to accommodate growth and enhance the livability of our neighborhoods.

Given this tremendous resource potential, Mayor Anthony A. Williams established a Mayoral Task Force on Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). Designated in September 2001, the purpose of the Task Force was to examine the potential for leveraging the District's Metro bus and rail service as part of a strategy for achieving creative, sustainable growth for our city. The Task Force met between October 2001 and January 2002 to identify obstacles, opportunities and strategies to implement this vision.

The Task Force was composed of over 30 stakeholders representative of diverse backgrounds and expertise – both proponents and skeptics of TOD. The Task Force was co-chaired by Andrew Altman, Director of Planning, and Dan Tangherlini, Acting Director of Transportation, and supported by a technical working group of planners, transit experts, economists and others.



TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT DEFINED

In order to capture the many features of TOD and help to guide future TOD implementation in the District, the Task Force developed a comprehensive definition.

Transit-Oriented Development in the District of Columbia is a land use strategy to accommodate new growth, strengthen neighborhoods, and expand choices and opportunities by capitalizing on bus and rail assets to stimulate and support vibrant, compact, diverse and accessible neighborhood centers within an easy walk of transit.

Mayor's Task Force on Transit Oriented Development



Within this definition are several inherent principles for transit-oriented development. TOD encourages a mix of uses – housing, retail, employers, open space, and civic or cultural uses. TOD in the District of Columbia can also be a strategy for maintaining a diverse community with a range of household types and incomes. TOD integrates into and enhances existing neighborhoods. TOD in the District encourages compact development and high-quality design to make transit easier and more attractive to access and utilize in lieu of private automobile trips. Finally, TOD directs growth toward transit stations and corridors to maximize that investment and minimize the impact of growing local traffic on the neighborhood.

THE BENEFITS OF TOD

Based on examples from across the country, transit-oriented development can offer major benefits for individual neighborhood and regional growth. These benefits cut across several broad categories:

- **Increasing neighborhood livability:** TOD can increase neighborhood options and convenience by clustering a mix of residential, shopping, work and recreational uses within an easy walk of each other to create a safe, interesting and attractive environment.
- **Reducing the number and length of auto trips in the region:** At the regional and local level, VMT could decrease by five to twenty five percent or more over the next two decades.
- **Providing housing flexibility that can improve affordability:** TOD can add to the supply of affordable housing by offering lower-cost and accessible housing products and by reducing household transportation expenditures.
- **Increasing household disposable income:** TOD can free-up disposable income by reducing the need to purchase and maintain one or more private autos – these funds saved can then be used for other household purchases.
- **Increasing transit ridership:** TODs can increase transit use by five percent or more overall at the regional level, while transit use at individual stations could increase by 20 to 40 percent. TOD can also assist in the development of alternative destination nodes and “off-peak” destinations outside of the traditionally overcrowded downtown routes.
- **Maximizing past municipal investments and reducing additional infrastructure costs:** Over the past 25 years the District has invested billions of dollars in the Metro bus and rail system. TOD can both utilize this past investment and reduce infrastructure costs including road maintenance and repair.

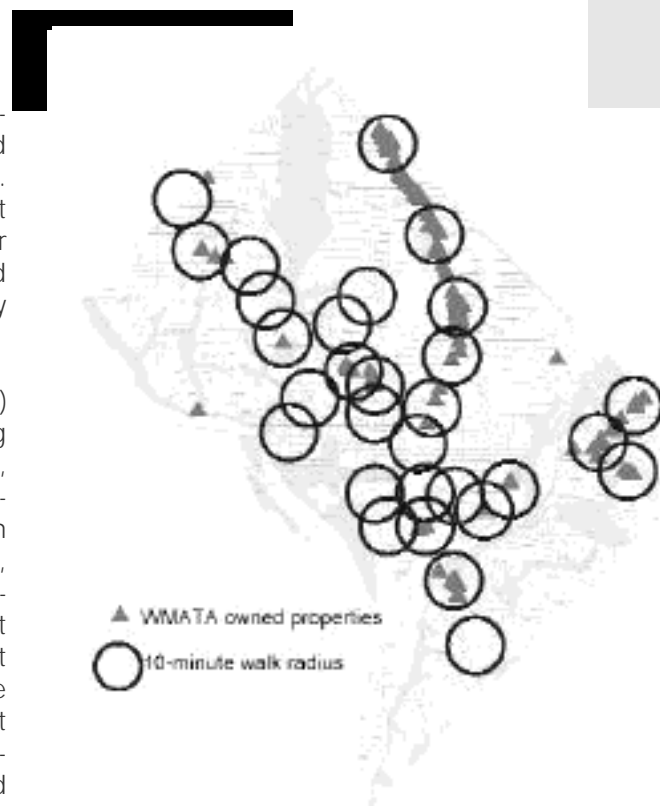
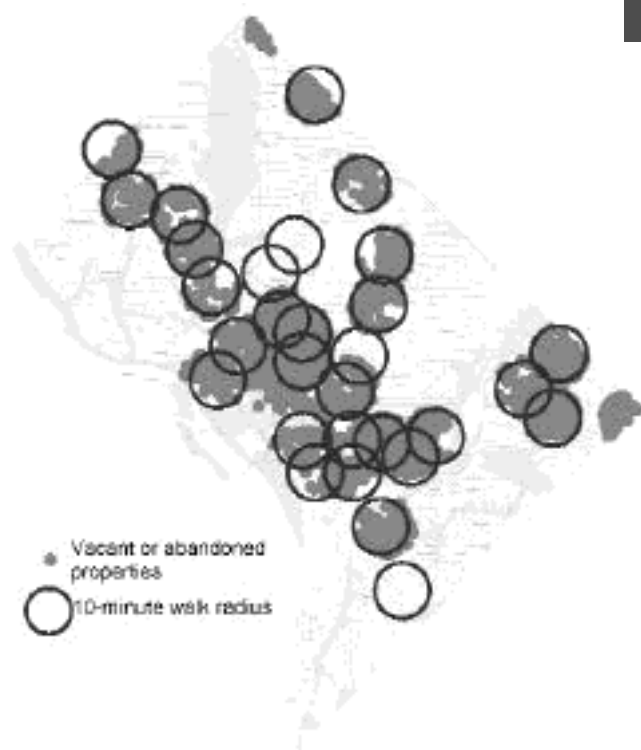


- **Increasing property values, tax base and economic opportunities:** In several studies, residential properties located near transit stops (within 2000 feet) sell for ~10% higher than similar housing beyond that distance.
- **Improving air and water quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions:** By reducing the amount of vehicle miles traveled (VMTs), associated pollutants and emissions, energy use and the need for additional impervious surfaces such as expanded roadways and parking lots, TOD can improve environmental quality and help the District in curbing greenhouse gas emissions contributing to global climate change.

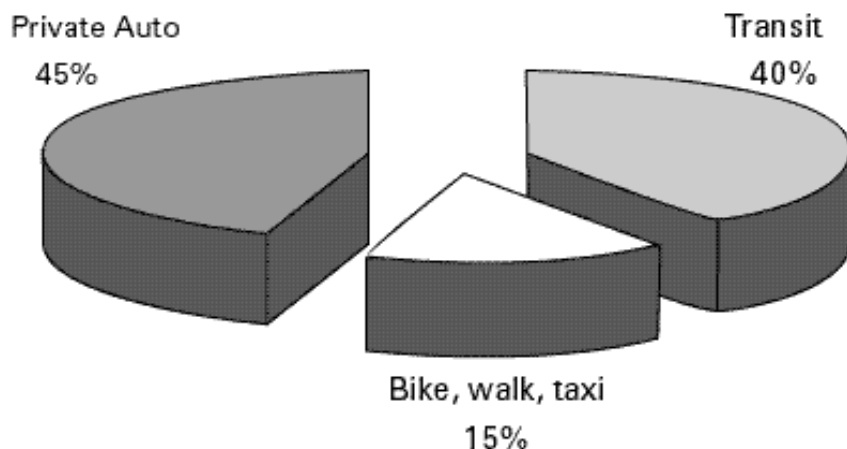
KEY FINDINGS

The District has over 2,000 acres of vacant or abandoned property (totaling just over 3 square miles) within a 10-minute walk of a transit station or major transit corridor. Another 676 acres are considered “underutilized” – where the value of buildings on the land is 30% or less of the value of the land itself. This land resource presents an important opportunity for the District to address neighborhood blight and abandonment; increase opportunities for housing, employment and neighborhood services; and attract new vitality to the District and individual neighborhoods. Preliminary studies estimate that this land resource, under current zoning, could accommodate roughly 37,000 new housing units for 78,000 new residents, 133 million square feet of office space, and 52 million square feet of potential retail space all conveniently served by transit (LDR Study for Office of Planning, 2001).

WMATA's major land holdings (roughly 1.6 million square feet) around transit stations are another significant factor in creating compact neighborhood centers anchored by transit. To date, WMATA has undertaken 54 joint development projects and connection agreements throughout the region at a value of more than \$2 billion on land they own. Another 25 projects are in the pipeline, the majority of which are outside the District. Not all of these projects have epitomized TOD principles, however new Joint Development Policies re-emphasize transit-oriented development as a key tenet of the Joint Development program and may catalyze development projects that emphasize around-the-clock transit usage and pedestrian activity over traditional commuter parking priorities. These new policies provide an opportunity to channel and structure the momentum for development around transit to exemplify TOD that serves neighborhood, fiscal, and transit objectives.



Commuter Transportation Mode Split



Over the past three decades, the greatest economic growth has occurred outside the District on the outer edges of the region. According to U.S. Census figures, from 1950 to 2000, the District lost 230,000 people – the equivalent of a moderate sized city. Over the same period the region grew by over a third from under 3 million people to nearly 4.6 million today and is expected to add another 500,000 people by 2010 (MWCOC). In comparison, this District is only expected to gain 35,000 – a mere 7% of this regional growth. Where the other 93% of the population growth will go, how they will move around the region, and how the traffic they generate will affect the quality of life in Washington are critical concerns in a TOD policy for the District of Columbia.

The Task Force found that a “transit-culture” already exists across the District of Columbia. Over 40% of District commuters take transit to work and many more take transit for non-work related trips (travel to school, errands, meetings, etc.). Another 15% walk, bike or take taxis to work. The 2000 Census reported that 37% of District households are without access to a private automobile (i.e. are transit-dependant) while 43% of households have only one vehicle (the average household size is 2.16 persons per household). Across the region, transit ridership is growing. WMATA has reported an increase of over 100,000 trips per day on MetroRail and MetroBus from 1998 to 2000. Transit ridership is expected to grow in the region so much so that MWCOC estimates that by 2005 the heavy rail system will be unable to accommodate approximately 104,000 transit trips demanded daily. How these unmet transit trips will be made – by foot and bike within the urban core or suburban town centers or in private automobiles trips across the region – is a compelling reason to consider a TOD policy across the Washington metropolitan region.

Regional trends demonstrate a growing attraction to the downtown for work and play, a desire to live closer to the workplace, and minimize time wasted in congestion. These factors indicate that the District is well positioned to ride the next wave of economic opportunity by pursuing and implementing TOD.

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Given these opportunities and potential benefits, the Task Force concluded TOD is one of the most effective tools available to Washington, D.C. to help realize its vision as one of the premier places in the world to live, learn, work and visit. The District’s 39 Metro stations and major bus corridors offer the potential to accommodate current residents and new residents in attractive, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods offering a range of housing choices served by high-quality transit that links them to opportunities and activities throughout the District and region.

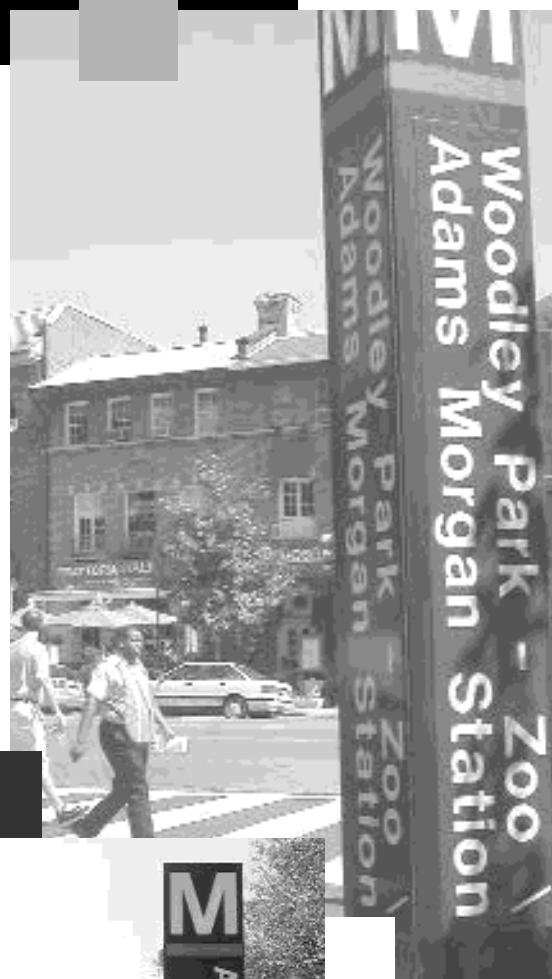
TOD IS AN APPROPRIATE STRATEGY FOR THE DISTRICT

Every group the Task Force met with — from neighborhood activists to members of the development community — voiced consistent support for TOD as a strategy to help guide the future growth of the District. Residents were attracted to TOD as a tool to create neighborhood centers that offered critical services, shopping, housing, and employment near transit stations giving them convenience, strengthening their unique neighborhood cores, and creating a sense of community. Developers supported the implementation of a TOD policy as a mechanism for greater predictability in the development process, as well as an exciting opportunity to develop new, creative, and quality projects. Local and regional policy makers favored TOD as a wise move toward more sustainable growth for the Washington region.

Washington, D.C.'s transit assets provide a significant locational advantage for attracting a greater share of housing and job growth in the City rather than at the edges of the region. By attracting additional residential growth and more employment to the District, the metropolitan region can realize significant benefits such as cleaner air, reduced levels of congestion, the preservation of open space, and the freeing up of limited infrastructure funds to be used for other important priorities throughout the metropolitan region. A TOD strategy provides direct benefits to the District and its residents as a result of growing the local tax base providing revenues for improved municipal services for residents.

The Task Force noted, however, that not all neighborhoods are on a level playing field in competing for and achieving transit-oriented development. Some neighborhoods wrestle with concerns over too much development while others struggle to attract any development at all. A District-wide TOD strategy must be based on the macro-issues of sustainable and equitable growth for the District, fiscal necessity, and prudent municipal planning. However, for it to be an effective strategy at the neighborhood level a TOD strategy must be flexible enough to respond to the unique needs of each community. Congress Heights does not have the same pressures or market conditions as Brookland. Columbia Heights is not the same as Friendship Heights. Therefore, while a TOD is an appropriate strategy for the District, it cannot be a rigid formula as it is applied in neighborhoods if it is to be effective in a struggling community like Congress Heights, a transitional or emerging community like Shaw or Columbia Heights, or a well-established neighborhood like Tenleytown or Brookland.

There is every cause for optimism about the future urban vitality of Washington, D.C. TOD is a complementary strategy to help leverage Washington, D.C.'s efforts to retain, stabilize and grow its residential population; to strengthen the city's fiscal well being; and to offer a wide-range of attractive mixed-income housing, retail offerings and employment opportunities for a diverse and dynamic city.



TARGETED SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Washington's bus and rail system offers a tremendous under-utilized opportunity to accommodate a significant share of the city's future development. Achieving TOD in the District of Columbia will require clear direction, active leadership and follow-through to seize the potential TOD offers.

The Mayor's Task Force on Transit-Oriented Development has prepared a set of prioritized recommendations for promoting the broader implementation of TOD in the District of Columbia. For each recommended action a series of supportive tools and strategies are identified in the sections that follow.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

1. Community Education. Community: Education, Engagement and Planning Program to Promote and Design TOD
2. Transit-Oriented Development Zoning: Zoning tools to support TOD and Design Guidelines
3. Transit Area Planning: Revitalization, Growth and Development Plans and Guidelines for Specific Transit Areas and focused infrastructure improvements

MID-TERM ACTIONS

4. Priority Preference: TOD as criteria for preferential public investment and Streamlined and Expedited Review and Permitting for Acceptable TOD Projects
5. Target Incentives: Targeted Amenities, Services and Programs for TOD Neighborhoods
6. Federal, Private and Regional Partnerships: Federal, Private and Regional Actions to Support TOD in the District

LONGER-TERM ACTIONS

7. Transit Enhancements: Transit Expansion Plan, Street-Use Categorization Guide, Regional Bus Study, Pilot transit-corridor
8. Dedicated Funding: Dedicated Funding For Transit and Transit-Area Planning and Implementation

The Task Force found that there was significant opportunity and need to pursue transit-oriented development in the District to strengthen the city's traditional neighborhood centers, attract new investment to struggling neighborhood main streets, and improve economic and environmental conditions throughout the region.

I Community Education, Engagement and Planning Program to Promote and Design TOD

While many District of Columbia residents live in transit-oriented communities, TOD is a largely unknown strategy in most neighborhoods in the District. Understanding the principles of TOD, its potential benefits, appropriate application, and possible consequences is critical for community members to develop a TOD strategy appropriate to their community and two-way flow of information between the local community, D.C. government, and developers. Neighborhoods will change. At issue is how a neighborhood will change and how to plan for and steer change to meet or protect neighborhood objectives. Local government must work with neighborhoods to develop mitigation strategies for any potential impacts from the TOD.



STRATEGIES:

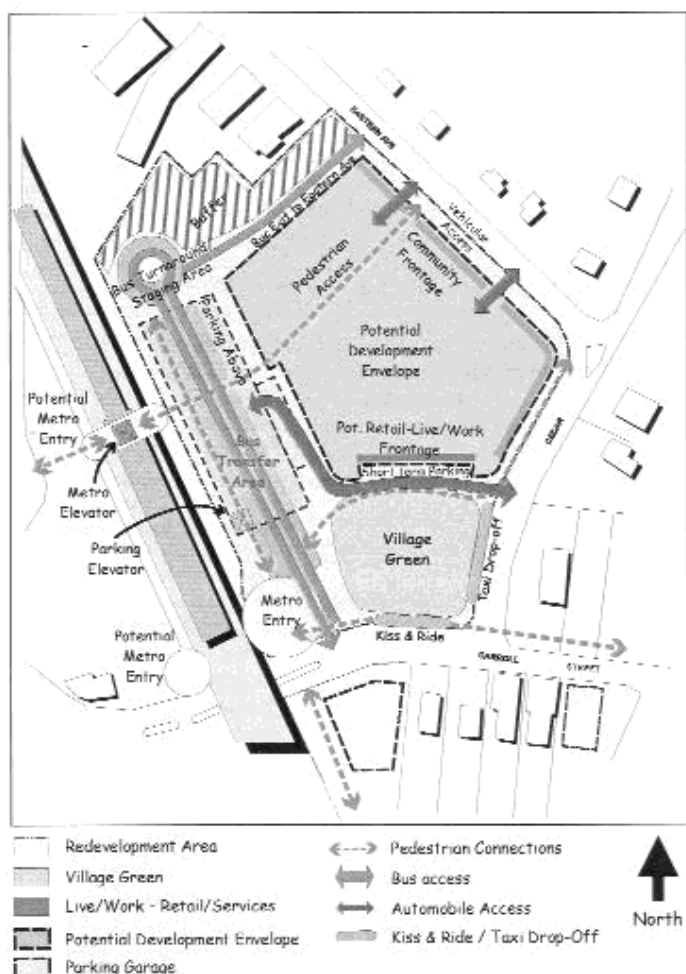
- Conduct an initial community TOD design workshop to explore various design approaches and solutions applicable to different neighborhood conditions and characters; develop a framework for TOD design guidelines; and produce resources for further community outreach and exploration of neighborhood design preferences.
- Design Preference tools for general neighborhood outreach
- Education and outreach tools, presentations, brochures, trainings, etc. for ANC Commissioners, neighborhood residents and community leaders

II. TOD Overlay Zones and Design Guidelines

In much of the District TOD is not happening. In part that is because at many Metrorail stations TOD is not easy to achieve or is not specifically identified as an objective under the city's regulations. An essential first step is for the city to define a clear TOD policy for the District and to draft and implement the regulatory tools (zoning and design guidelines) to facilitate TODs. Numerous Ward Plans of the District's 1998 Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan include transit-oriented planning concepts. Building upon this foundation, a logical TOD policy can be articulated and implementation facilitated. Additionally, existing overlay zones in the District (such as Dupont Circle) also reflect TOD principles and can be a model in developing a TOD overlay.

STRATEGIES:

- Develop a TOD Policy and vision for the District based on the Task Force's definition of TOD.
- TOD overlay zone
- TOD language to include in update of Comprehensive Plan – including transit expansion areas
- Design guidelines for transit areas



III Station Area Plans for Specific Transit Areas

For TOD to be an effective strategy in Washington, D.C. it will need to respond to the unique needs of each community. Developing and implementing transit area plans is an effective tool to leverage the benefits of transit in the context of the needs of individual neighborhoods.

STRATEGIES:

- Develop detailed transit area plans for 2 – 5 transit stations or corridors that represent a mix of typologies
- Rezone to correlate with current Comprehensive Plan
- Define what is meant by a "transit-corridor" and "transit-opportunity area," determine geographic boundaries, and develop a planning strategy

IV TOD “Priority Preference”

The Task Force recognizes the tremendous benefits TOD offers to both the District and individual neighborhoods. Therefore, TOD and the principles it embodies should serve as a guide for promoting and facilitating desirable development in the District and criteria for evaluating the value of public investments. TOD as a priority criterion could be enacted through three strategies:

- 1 Once a TOD policy and vision is defined, TOD should be included as a standard evaluation criterion for public investment. For instance, public investment could be targeted to development that strives to maximize transit access and usage and reflects TOD principles. This has not historically been the case. The proposed East Capitol Dwellings HOPE VI development, while only blocks from the Capitol Heights metro, fails to recognize and utilize this asset. This application should extend to include the disposition of public property, the allocation of tax incentives, and expenditures for capital improvements and allocation of programmatic assistance.
- 2 Expediting the development review and permitting process for projects that reflect neighborhood and TOD objectives. Every group the Task Force spoke with from the neighborhoods to the development community put a high value on predictability in the development process. A “Fast Pass” program to expedite the approval and implementation of development the District is seeking would be very beneficial. This requires the development of a clear and consistent “checklist” developed in advance of development proposals.
- 3 Provision of public amenities and services specifically for neighborhoods where TOD could be implemented. These amenities and services could be managed through a “sub-cabinet” that would think strategically about opportunity areas and contemplate and implement any public improvements that would make TOD more attractive to both the existing neighborhood (i.e. better infrastructure, improved open spaces, or recreation facilities) and potential developers (i.e. infrastructure, etc.)

STRATEGIES:

- Strategy, staffing, and functioning of TOD sub-cabinet
- Strategy for coordinating agencies to provide/extract compensatory amenities (i.e. recreation resources, parking redesigns, etc.) to priority transit areas (linked to bullet above)
- “Strikeforce” for expediting review and permitting Strategy, staffing, and functioning of TOD multi-agency - same person/people should do this and bullets above together
- Criteria/checklist for pre-approval or priority approvals to “good” projects

Washington’s bus and rail system offers a tremendous under-utilized opportunity to accommodate a significant share of the city’s future development.



V Targeted Amenities, Services and Programs For TOD Neighborhoods

At many Metro stations TOD is unlikely to happen without significant incentives. At other stations no incentives are necessary. Many of the necessary tools to realize broader implementation of TOD in the District are already in place. Transit areas in emerging and transitional areas are most likely to garner the greatest return on investment and take advantage of the transit resource with a limited investment from government.

STRATEGIES:

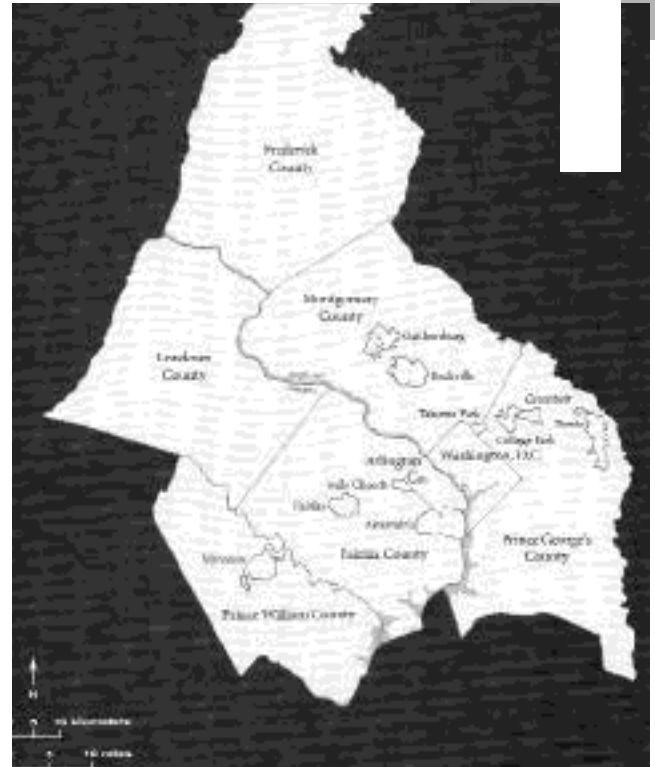
- Identify priority transit areas for directing existing incentives (low income housing tax credits, TDRs, etc.)
- Identify areas for targeted land acquisition, assembly, packaging (with WMATA parcels), and disposition around priority transit areas
- Provide community with parking, pedestrian and traffic studies of transit areas
- Support and encourage car-sharing programs near transit to reduce parking pressures
- Develop and implement innovative parking and pedestrian solutions near transit
- Install bicycle lanes and amenities to provide further transportation options
- Create a pedestrian coordinator (similar to bicycle coordinator) to plan/implement pedestrian amenities, routes, and linkages
- Provide or seek resources for safe corridors to TOD and transit areas
- Promotion, outreach, and targeting of existing services /programs to maintain affordable housing for existing residents
- Encourage DC government use of Metro Checks and promotion to other employers for use
- Promote employer-assisted or employer-provided housing near transit and incentives available for such
- Develop and promote Location-efficient mortgages (LEMs) in combination with other employer-assisted or government assisted home purchase programs

VI Federal and Regional Partnerships to Support District TOD

The benefits of a TOD strategy extend well beyond the District. Likewise implementation of the strategy requires policy and financial participation by the District's federal and regional partners.

This means, however, that the District must play a more active leadership role in shaping the Washington metropolitan region. As traffic congestion increases to record levels, compliance with clean-air regulations has become a significant concern that could limit the region's ability to grow and compete nationally. TOD, by providing greater opportunities to walk and take transit can reduce the harmful emissions from hours of congestion and can, politically, be a win-win strategy for all regional partners in addressing both growth and environmental objectives. The District can lead by example by pursuing TOD citywide. As the center of the region, DC is the natural advocate to advance collaborative, productive regional solutions.

District leadership is necessary in working with outside partners to promote transit-oriented development and transit usage. Whether this means setting a framework for development of WMATA Joint Development sites, working with private employers on employee transit-subsidy programs, creating regional coalitions of urban jurisdictions, or catalyzing innovative Federal government employee housing programs – the District must be an active partner and leader.



STRATEGIES:

- Modification/updating of WMATA's Joint Development program to assure it will be complementary of the District's TOD objectives
- Ensure that COG regional air quality model accurately reflects impacts from land use changes
- Develop strategy to leverage existing Executive Order that requires downtown development for many federal agencies and commissions.
- District of Columbia live-near-you-work program and incentives for federal workers-Regional land use and development modeling tool, application and coordination with regional partners



VII Transit Enhancement

The District's transit system (bus and rail) needs to be expanded to better serve the needs of residents. More District residents use buses than use Metrorail. Transit service in the District is of higher quality on radial routes oriented towards the downtown business district than on cross-town routes and routes serving neighborhood activity centers. The District needs improved cross-town transit connections—and a denser network of transit routes in general, including bus and rail services—to link neighborhood centers and Metrorail stations together. The bus and rail systems need increased passenger capacity to accommodate future ridership growth.

STRATEGIES:

- District-wide street classification for planning and development
- Transit expansion plan
- Regional bus study
- District Government Employee Metrochek program
- Transit enhancement – full implementation of Smart Cards
- Transit Marketing – educating potential users of transit availability and benefits

An essential first step is for the city to define a clear TOD policy for the District and to draft and implement the regulatory tools (zoning and design guidelines) to facilitate TODs.

VIII Dedicated Funding For Transit and Transit-Area Planning and Implementation

Reduce subsidies for expenses related to auto trips, traffic, and parking in the District to provide a reliable and dedicated stream of funds to

- encourage and support the concentration of uses around transit;
- encourage the use of transit, and
- contribute to payment of the District's share of regional transit costs.

STRATEGIES:

- Explore actions for specific research including:
- Market-based parking fees
- Graduated payment for multiple residential parking permits
- Property Tax Modifications
 - Tax Increment Financing
 - Transit Expansion Cost-Sharing
 - Property Tax Surcharge
 - Property Tax Re-Orientation
- Motor fuels tax
- Joint Development fees/rent

